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Chapter 1253: Qianchong Empire

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Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up upon seeing the blood essence.

He quickly wrapped it within a layer of his zhenqi before he turned to Zhang Jiuxiao and said, "I'll take some time to examine it. For the time being, you should cultivate using the method that I imparted to you earlier."

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After which, he turned around and returned to his room.

With a grasp of his hand, he created an isolation barrier around him and leaped into the Myriad Anthive Nest.

It would be best for him to be in an environment with absolute silence while studying Zhang Jiuxiao's blood essence. It would also be much safer as well.

After finding a place to sit down, Zhang Xuan had the droplet of blood essence float in front of him. With a tap of his finger, a droplet of blood essence was squeezed out of his fingertip, and he pushed it toward Zhang Jiuxiao's blood essence.

After careful examination, Zhang Xuan could only shake his head helplessly.

There doesn't seem to be any resonance between the two droplets of blood essence. It seems like I'm not from the Sage Zhang Clan after all.

If the bloodline of the Zhang Clan was truly running through his veins, there would at least have been even the slightest reaction between his and Zhang Jiuxiao's blood essence, but even with his Eye of Insight, there was nothing of the sort. In other words, the body that he had transcended into had nothing to do with the Sage Zhang Clan.

It seemed like he had really been thinking too much into it! How could there be such a coincidence in the world?

But if I am not a member of the Zhang Clan, which freaking poison master was so bored as to travel all the way to Tianxuan Kingdom just to plant the Innate Fetal Poison into me?

That person had to be really sick in the mind! That person had better not let Zhang Xuan catch him!

In any case, whether he was from the Zhang Clan or not would not really affect his plans.

If he was from the Zhang Clan, he would just have to hold back a little on that young prodigy, but since it was already confirmed that he was not... Well, he could not be blamed for being merciless!

After confirming that he was not an offspring of the Zhang Clan, Zhang Xuan began looking into whether he could refine unique bloodlines.

It seems like it is really difficult to refine a person's bloodline.

It did not take long before Zhang Xuan arrived at a conclusion—refining a person's bloodline was a feat so difficult that it was nigh impossible.

That was to be expected. If it was that easy to raise a person's bloodline, every offspring of the Sage Clans would have been an inner member.

Before leaving the Myriad Anthive Nest, Zhang Xuan suddenly recalled how much his cultivation had risen in recent days, so he confidently sought his clone for a battle.

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As usual, he ended up being viciously pummeled into the ground, nearly losing his life.

Against others, there were none of the same cultivation realm who could possibly rival him. Yet, no matter how hard he tried, he was still a long distance away from matching up to his clone.

Ahhh, so stifling!

After leaving the Myriad Anthive Nest, Zhang Xuan continued offering pointers toward Zhang Jiuxiao's cultivation.

As expected of a genius from the Zhang Clan. Despite the low purity of Zhang Jiuxiao's bloodline, the talent that he possessed was truly spectacular. His ability to learn was almost like a sponge; not even the most talented member in the Xuanxuan Faction could come close to him!

In just six short days, it was as if he had undergone a metamorphosis. While his cultivation remained at Primordial Spirit realm intermediate stage, his fighting prowess had risen to a level where even the two listening-in students were no longer necessarily a match for him.

Thinking about the guidance that Zhang Xuan had offered over the past six days, Zhao Xingmo was filled with nothing but shock. His pointers are really spot-on, especially on the details. Even I wouldn't have noticed those aspects if he hadn't pointed them out explicitly...

Zhang Jiuxiao had quite a handful of inconspicuous but nasty flaws that even he had failed to discern, but Zhang Xuan was able to uncover them keenly without the slightest error in his analysis. Such an eye of discernment was nothing short of fearsome!

Just with his eye of discernment and state of mind, it was no wonder he could successfully crash the Qingyuan Empire Master Teacher Pavilion! Zhao Xingmo had no doubt that even in the Sanctum of Sages, Zhang Xuan would be able to rise through the ranks and glow brighter than everyone else.

On the seventh day, a massive city came into sight.

"We have finally arrived at the Qianchong Empire!"

Standing by the window, Zhao Xingmo said, "Judging from the timing, the candidates chosen from the other empires should have arrived as well. Let's head straight to the Qianchong Empire Master Teacher Pavilion."

On the journey there, Zhang Xuan had learned that Zhao Xingmo was responsible for the primary selection phase of the Eight Conferred Empires. He had been to the other empires, and the Qingyuan Empire was the final stop for him.

Those who had cleared the primary selections should have made their way over themselves, and judging from the current time, they should have all arrived. So, as soon as the candidates from the Qingyuan Empire arrived, they would be ready to start the secondary selection.

"May I know how many people have cleared the primary selection, and how many slots are there for the secondary selections?"

"The Qianchong Empire has three slots, and the other three stronger Conferred Empires have two slots each. The remaining four, including Qingyuan, only have a slot each. All in all, the Eight Conferred Empires should have thirteen slots in total. Other than that, there are also the Ten Tier-3 Sage Clans, and each of them have two slots. Thus, all in all, there should be 33 people, and only 20 will remain after the secondary selection," Zhao Xingmo said.

"That's still good." Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

20 out of 33, it would be fine as long as they were not in the bottom half of the candidates.

That should not be too difficult.

Seeing how Zhang Xuan's expression had relaxed after hearing the rules, Zhao Xingmo warned, "Don't let your guard down just because the proportion of candidates that are cleared for the secondary selection is high. Those who are able to obtain the candidacy to Sanctum of Sages are all top-notch geniuses in their regions, experts among experts. It won't be easy to rise above the rest of them."

No matter what, the Qingyuan Empire was the weakest among the Conferred Empires. Even as top-notch geniuses from the Qingyuan Empire, there could still be plenty of geniuses outside of the Qingyuan Empire who were stronger than them.

"I acknowledge that there's no Primordial Spirit realm intermediate stage cultivators who could possibly be your match—after all, even I lost to you. However, the requirement to entering the Sanctum of Sages is that the candidates must be a master teacher below thirty years old... There are some formidable geniuses who have already reached Leaving Aperture realm. In other words, you won't just be facing Primordial Spirit realm experts!"

"Leaving Aperture realm?"

"That's right. One genius of the Qianchong Empire has already reached Leaving Aperture realm. Even though he hasn't undergone the lightning tribulation yet, his fighting prowess is still not one to be underestimated. There are also quite a few from the Tier-3 Sage Clans who have reached that level as well. If you let your guard down before them, you could be done in before you know it." Zhao Xingmo nodded.

He was only saying this much because he had really high expectations for the young man before him.

As powerful as the young man was, the problem was that he was not just faced with opponents of the same cultivation realm. Furthermore, the opponents would not be suppressing their cultivation to his level before fighting with him either...

Thus, it would be no easy feat to get into the top twenty among the 33 people.

"I see... Thank you for your warning. I'll just have to deal with whatever comes my way then," Zhang Xuan replied calmly.

Instead of leaving him on edge, Zhao Xingmo's words had left Zhang Xuan feeling slightly excited instead.

While his cultivation was only at Primordial Spirit realm intermediate stage, his fighting prowess was already on par with Leaving Aperture realm advanced stage cultivators. Previously, out of fear that he would accidentally hurt Zhao Xingmo, he had only used a fifth of his full strength. If the other candidates were really as powerful as Zhao Xingmo had said they were, he should be able to have some fun in the secondary selection!

Seeing Zhang Xuan's expression, Zhao Xingmo knew that his warning had effectively fallen on deaf ears. Shaking his head, he decided to nag no more.

At this point, the aerial saint beast beneath them suddenly began diving down, heading toward the middle of the majestic city beneath them.

Not too long later, the Qianchong Empire Master Teacher Pavilion came into sight.

They landed on the square just in front of the Master Teacher Pavilion, and barely a moment after they had landed, a few old men immediately stepped forward to welcome them.

"Zhao shi!"

The person leading the group was an elder who appeared to be in his sixties. There was no beard or moustache on his pale face, and his eyebrows were arched like crescents. Despite being dressed in a simple green robe, he carried an imposing disposition with him.

Activating his Eye of Insight, Zhang Xuan discreetly assessed the elder, and he realized that the latter's cultivation had actually reached Half-Grand Dominion realm!

The other old men following behind him were not weak either. Just like Song Xuan, they were all Leaving Aperture realm pinnacle experts.

As expected of the number one Conferred Empire. Just this group of men could easily bring about a complete change in the leadership of the Qingyuan Empire by themselves.

Zhao Xingmo nodded impassively to the other party's warm greeting before introducing the duo standing behind him. "Pavilion Master Yue, these two young men are the candidates chosen from the Qingyuan Empire—Zhang Xuan and Zhang Jiuxiao."

After which, Zhao Xingmo turned around and said, "This elder over here is the head of the Qianchong Empire Master Teacher Pavilion, Yue Yiquan."

"Paying respects to Pavilion Master Yue!" Hearing that the elder before them was the head of the regional Master Teacher Pavilion, Zhang Xuan and Zhang Jiuxiao swiftly clasped their fists and bowed respectfully.

"Zhao shi, this way please." Pavilion Master Yue shot the both of them a glance, but he did not bother responding to their greetings. He turned his attention back to Zhao Xingmo and began leading the way forward.

"If I remember correctly, Song Xuan seems to be his uncle. Most probably, the reason he was dispatched to the Qingyuan Empire was to have him accrue some contribution so that he could be promoted to the position of vice pavilion master, but..." Zhang Jiuxiao sent a telepathic message over to Zhang Xuan.

Zhang Xuan swiftly understood what Zhang Jiuxiao was saying.

That explained why Pavilion Master Yue would even bypass the most basic of formalities with them. So, it was because the other party harbored enmity toward him.

As an envoy dispatched by the Empire Alliance Master Teacher, Song shi should have conducted a thorough investigation of the matter before passing judgement, even if he had to withstand immense pressure from the populace for that. Thus, his very act of sentencing Sun Qiang, Elder Xu, and the others to the death penalty rashly was a flawed judgement in itself. As such, there was no doubt that he had to be punished for his lapse in responsibility.

And with Song shi's punishment, not only would Song shi be no longer qualified to rise to the position of the vice pavilion master, even Pavilion Master Yue's reputation would take a blow as well, considering that he was the one who had chosen to send Song shi over. Given so, it was inevitable that Pavilion Master Yue would harbor some enmity toward Zhang Xuan.

"Let's go!" Zhang Xuan said.

There was nothing he could do about the other party's enmity toward him, and he couldn't be bothered with it either.

The Qianchong Empire was just a temporary stop before he headed to the Sanctum of Sages. He wouldn't be staying there for too long, so the other party's attitude toward him meant nothing at all.

At most, he would avoid encounters with Pavilion Master Yue as much as possible.

Perhaps because the Master Teacher Pavilion had been cleared in advance, there weren't too many people along the corridors, except for those master teachers who had specially come to welcome them.

Even the weakest of those master teachers were at 7-star pinnacle, and forming two rows by the side, there were at least several hundred of them.

They sure have a steady foundation, Zhang Xuan thought as he passed in between the two rows of master teachers.

These master teachers possessed a cultivation of Primordial Spirit realm pinnacle at the very minimum. Experts of this caliber were truly limited in the Qianchong Empire, but here, they were as numerous like the grass along the road. It was as if one would see them at every turn. Truly, as expected of the number one Conferred Empire.

"The reason behind the Qianchong Empire's overwhelming strength is due to their proximity to a spirit mine. They are rich in spirit stones, and they have the Master Teacher Pavilion's support as well. It was based on these two factors that they were able to grow so prosperous over the years!" Noticing Zhang Xuan's astonishment, Zhang Jiuxiao sent a telepathic message over to explain.

"Spirit mine?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"Un." Zhang Jiuxiao nodded. "According to the rumors, there's a concentrated high-tier spirit stone mine in the Qianchong Empire. It's for this reason that they were able to attract countless experts to work for them, and this formed a virtuous cycle that furthered their development. As such, their national strength grew stronger and stronger."

Of the four necessary elements to cultivation—wealth, peers, method, and environment—wealth was indeed ranked at the very top.

With sufficient money, a person would be able to attract talents to work for him, and once there were sufficient experts, cultivating a new generation of experts wouldn't be too difficult either. Through this cycle, a country would be able to grow stronger and stronger.

If an empire was utterly poor, lacking in precious cultivation resources, which expert would be willing to waste their time there? Naturally, it would be impossible to established a high-tier Master Teacher Pavilion either.

"You said that... there is a concentrated high-tier spirit mine here?" Zhang Xuan's breathing hastened in agitation.

"That's right. Most of the concentrated high-tier spirit stones in circulation in the other empires all originate from here!" Zhang Jiuxiao nodded.

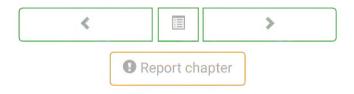
"If I wish to earn concentrated high-tier spirit stones here, where should I go?" Zhang Xuan asked anxiously.

He happened to require as many concentrated high-tier spirit stones as possible to raise his cultivation. Since there was a spirit mine here, there should be plenty of concentrated high-tier spirit stone in circulation as well. If he could just lay his hands on some of them, he would be able to push his cultivation forward!

"I am not too sure about that either, but... according to rumors, there seem to be a black market in the Qianchong Empire, and concentrated high-tier spirit stones are often traded there in high quantities. If you really do require concentrated high-tier spirit stones, it should be worth checking that out."

After which, Zhang Jiuxiao pondered for a moment later before continuing. "However, this is second-hand information, so do take it with a pinch of salt."

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